

Challenge of the Open Door to the Door Thrice-Barred

By DONALDINE CAMERON

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WHEN the Presbyterian Women of California first threw down their gauntlet before the "Powers of Darkness" which dominated the Chinese community of the West, they opened a door for enslaved women and children—"A Door of Hope," beyond which the shackles forged by oppression and fear are struck from them, and they stand forth, a new creation!

Their challenge was taken up, and the conflict is still on after almost half a century! Today, as of old, the barriers of iron bolts and bars, as well as those more intangible hindrances of gross ignorance, superstitious fear and moral depravity, hold back those who long to reach the masses of Chinese women, young girls and little children who are still enslaved physically and spiritually, though living their lives under a Christian government.

As the New Era program opens up larger plans for the coming years, it is well to take stock of what has been accomplished in the past through this special department of the King's business, that we may accumulate new faith and courage for the forward step.

Looking back less than a year over files of daily papers from Central California and from Oregon, one may read the accounts, lightly even jestingly written, of how a young Chinese girl, barely fifteen, was abducted from her home at Marysville (a poor home, hardly worthy the name!) taken to Portland, Oregon, and sold for \$500 to an evil "Highbinder" keeper of a gambling den and owner of slaves. His victim was safely hidden for a few days, behind the well-guarded doors of this infamous place; but the long arm of American law, directed by a messenger from the Rescue Home in San Francisco, finally reached through to set the child free; only to encounter later yet greater obstacles in the struggle for final possession. A certain type of American lawyers are always available when the owners of a Chinese girl wish to invoke the technicalities of the law to hinder or prevent an attempted rescue. Two weeks of greatest anxiety and many distressing experiences were

endured; but in this instance, as in so many others, justice finally triumphed, "not by might nor by power," but by the guidance and help of His Spirit whose battles we wage in His Might.

In rescue cases we have learned that possession is nine points of the law, and one good judge saying "you may take her," while another not so good was preparing papers on which to delay our going; we finally made good our escape in the early hours of the dawn and the dark hours of the night, by routes which even the united efforts of attorneys and high-binders were not able to circumvent.

After all these tragic experiences the object of our anxious care is repaying us for the efforts made on her behalf by her quiet obedience and ready conformity to rules of the school, in all ways showing herself willing to learn and ready to help cheerfully in the work of the Mission Home.

Another journey to the northern states was made in response to an urgent call for help on behalf of a much abused little "domestic slave." Beaten and ill-treated beyond even her long-suffering powers of endurance, poor Dong Leung at last made her escape from the cruel taskmasters who had held her in servitude since she was five years old and took refuge with a woman who had befriended her. Her owners, of course, demanded her and so the good young chief of police in Pasco, where the child lived, had to interfere on her behalf. He and his wife gave her shelter; but the problem of the poor child's future was a serious one, until one day a chance visitor to that far-away town told Dong Leung's friends of the Home in California where such as she were protected and properly cared for. After days and nights of travel the missionary and her faithful young Chinese companion stepped off the train at the busy little western town. Looking about for someone to direct our way we were suddenly almost overwhelmed by the joyous greeting of an odd, stunted and quite disheveled small Chinese person, who dashed through the crowd on the station platform straight toward her attractive young country-woman, Miss Wu! Such was our first meeting with the little girl we had traveled so far to save; and that wise primitive instinct which quickly sensed in friends so new and untried,

those whom she might fully trust, made it easy to get her whole story; and a sadder one we have seldom listened to, even in work which holds much of life's tragedy.

A Happy Little Girl

For hours kneeling before us, she poured out the sorrows of years, her words and her tears flowed together, both seeming to bring relief. From head to foot that poor little form showed the cruel marks of brutish treatment, and to some extent her mind had also suffered.

It was a cheerful party of three that boarded the west-bound train the following day when small Dong Leung turned her back upon Pasco and slavery; and her tear-stained face toward that unknown but longed-for haven she knew was ready to receive her. Much of struggle, of heartache and of defeat lay before the little traveler on the better road before she learned to seek help from Him who alone could help her overcome the tempestuous temper, the long-formed habits of deceit and other sins never before corrected; but slowly and surely the change came and the transformation has been wonderful.

Some day, should you, who read this brief story, chance to call at the home of the president of our most western Foreign Missionary Board in San Francisco, her door would be opened to you by a scrupulously neat and smiling little maid, all clad in stiffly starched sham and fuh and white apron; in quite good English she would bid you enter, and if she followed



PLAYMATES FROM THE CHILDREN'S HOME

the bent of her own warm heart and ready hospitality, you would be urged to stay for a meal prepared and served by her capable and willing hands. You ask: "Who is this happy little maid of the pleasant countenance and kindly heart?" Or have you guessed that it is Dong Leung! Only in her life "Old things have passed away, behold all things have become new."

Whole Story in One

Our newest arrival, So Ying, would make a whole story all by herself; so varied and so great have been her misfortunes from the days of her childhood in Hong Kong up to the day when almost hopeless she turned her deepest misfortunes into her greatest blessing. For three years this attractive young slave girl experienced to the uttermost the misery, the bitterness, the hopelessness of such a life; passed from one owner to another, all evil and cruel. So Ying finally despaired of ever buying her own freedom as at first lured on by false promises she had hoped to do. Ever over her hung the weight of \$4,000 which never seemed to grow less. She tried to assert her rights, only to become more enslaved, and finally her life was threatened. All she ever heard of the Mission from her associates in the degraded life she lived was enough to terrify her away; but she at last met a woman who told her the truth. She accepted it as such and, waiting her opportunity, made her escape and arrived at the friendly door where she was kindly received. The usual efforts were made to regain possession of her; but So Ying stood her ground. Then came the usual struggle with her own personal sins; temper, the thoughts and the words that rise from a mind filled with evil things for years; but suddenly and evidently in answer to prayer, a great change came; a new So Ying seemed to grow up within and all the ways of life underwent a change.

From a lovely friend, "A Lady from Missouri," came the gift of a dainty Chinese Bible in a beautifully carved case. Such joy as the precious gift was received with, one does not often see in the somewhat immovable Oriental! So Ying's face fairly radiated happiness and with tears in her eyes she exclaimed: "I wanted a Bible of my own so much and I prayed to God to let me have one and now He has answered my prayer so soon!"

Many-sided Work

These two or three stories, gleaned from among so many, can but very inadequately suggest the scope and value of the rescue work. It takes on so many different forms, such as preventive work in saving little girls of tender years from plural marriage. Co-operating with the Immigration Officials in preventing the landing and sale of young girls. Saving little children who would certainly fall upon an evil fate did not the Mission reach out for them before it is too late.

For these latter there is an ever-growing work which has been the outgrowth of the Rescue Home, but which for the last two years has had to be cared for in a separate building, though under the same Board of Directors.

This children's home, known as "The Tooker School," is now quite beyond its present accommodations. Through the gift of Captain Robert Dollar a fine tract of land for building a new school for these children and young girls is now owned by the Presbyterian Board of Foreign Missions. And all who are interested in this work for the Chinese in the United States are earnestly hoping to see these plans for a forward movement in saving and training for God's service more children and young girls carried to completion as part of the New Era program of our Foreign Mission Board.



HOW THE CHINESE GIRLS HELPED UNCLE SAM!

The Rescue Home in San Francisco is laying the foundations for a well-equipped industrial work, which promises in time to become a definite means of support for a large number of rescued women and girls. The average number cared for now by the Woman's Occidental Board is one hundred in both Homes. We hesitate to add to our number because of lack of room. Shall we stand still, blind to the opportunity God holds out to us? Shall we not rather, "Praising Him for all that is past and trusting Him for all that is to come," press forward in the "Strength of the Lord," seeing to it that we hold wide the Open Door, "That all who will may enter; and none shall be denied?"



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